

Privilege

Mr. Speaker, what we have here is not just a flagrant violation of parliamentary privilege, it is also an obvious case of political fraud perpetrated by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, I know that in the light of these facts, you would kick these scoundrels out the door, if you could, but I also realize you have very little leeway since you can only apply the Standing Orders as they concern questions of privilege.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I want to read to you an important citation from page 543 of Bourinot's second edition, a quotation which will be of importance to you in your decision and of no interest to any Conservative cabinet minister because it was not made up by some Tory slogan writer at some Tory advertising agency. It represents the historic traditions of this House.

The principal purpose of the House of Commons, in fact, is the consideration and criticism of the Estimates and the taxes required to meet the public expenditures and the committees in question are the parliamentary machinery by means of which the House chiefly exercises its political and constitutional functions.

That is the citation from Bourinot.

When the House of Commons committee is currently conducting hearings on a technical paper on the proposed sales tax, how can it expect to get a complete range of opinions from Canadians when millions of our fellow citizens read these two-page newspaper ads which state blatantly that certain tax changes are going to come into effect? Many Canadians who might otherwise be prone to submit a brief to the committee have taken the conclusion and taken the message from this ad of why bother. We have read the ads that say no matter what we say the Department of Finance has said changes are coming into effect, no matter what any individual Canadian may think. I would go on to cite for you, Mr. Speaker, Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, a citation at page 192 which reads as follows:

While privilege may be codified, contempt may not, because new forms of obstruction are constantly being devised and parliament must be able to invoke its penal jurisdiction to protect itself against these new forms.

Mr. Speaker, the none too hidden message of the ads is we are doing what we like whether you like it or not, whether your members of parliament like it or not,

whether the House of Commons likes it or not, or the members specifically on the committee of finance like it or not. "Please Save This Notice", no changes allowed. I know that is what the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance really believe.

I point out to you, Mr. Speaker, the definition of contempt contained in the twentieth edition of Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, Chapter 10, page 143:

It may be stated generally that any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent for the offence.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance and their Conservative propaganda gurus who come up with new forms of obstruction obviously believed when they inserted this ad that they did not need to wait for any final parliamentary approval. They did not even need to wait for approval on second reading. They did not even need to wait for the parliamentary committee to report. They did not even need to wait for the act to receive first reading in the House of Commons as a bill. They ran the ads. They ran the ads not in order to help Parliament but to obstruct, impede, and threaten Parliament.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I have read some of the citations from the authorities and I now want to give some references from leading members of parliament over the years within our lifetime. There are hundreds of quotations I could cite on the basis of the tradition that the House of Commons and only the House of Commons can pass upon a tax measure or an expenditure measure.

I will cite a few of these important historical references because I know, Mr. Speaker, that you share my concern and my understanding that the rules which we apply today rest upon our traditions and our history even though the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have no belief in history. Their motto is: "Why worry about history or traditions of the House of Commons when a good advertising copywriter can write one for you?"

I quote the late John George Diefenbaker, cited in *Hansard* on page 189 on December 11, 1947. It was a debate about tax changes announced over the radio by